

## NEW WAY TO ACQUIRE CUBA.

Barro.—I ask leave to present the subject of Cuba. The Pacific Rail Road, in a new phase, before the public mind of the country, for general reflection, and as it is nothing which ought to be considered as a party question about it, I am scarcely apprehend that any party South, North, or West, will refuse the people a free discussion upon the merits and national importance of the proposition.

Time has expanded the march of mind and extended the horizon from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and as the hoop of Diogenes was part and parcel of his life to lead the stars together, and without which it could not have been a task, the stride may be said with equal truth to constitute, as it is an entire international rail road from Ocean to Ocean, direct, as a hoop to bind the States together, and without which there can be no Union.

As Congress claims a right, under the Constitution, to aid and assist in building a rail road from the Mississippi river to the Pacific, is it not equally constitutional to aid and assist in building the eastern and flow, from the Atlantic to the Mississippi—where, without which, it cannot be national?

The object being important to all the northern and southwestern States, throws it into the grade of a national subject, and it would be unnecessary to expect the cooperation of the people and Congress, without a correct understanding of the subject in all its relative bearings. And in relation to Cuba, I consider that the great and severe, and of the late Congress to get possession of that island, exhibited to Spain and the world, in the most prominent manner why we may never get it, by that course of Congressional policy.

Spain is not kind at a speculating bargain; and knows that she holds the terms in her own hands. And she thinks that all our northwestern and southwestern States, by their geographical location, are to be always compelled to discourage their protection of vast agricultural labor, and mercantile vast interests, and wants to return, by way of the mouth of the Mississippi, and its numerous tributaries, into and through the Gulf of Mexico and pass as it were, under the guns of her Cuba Gibraltar, as it is that power which she holds over the vast commerce of the northwestern and southwestern half of the United States, on which, no doubt prompted by England and France, at each end, that she puts more value, than the intrinsic worth of Cuba.

But there is a more national, easy, and more judicious and precise way for Congress with one-sixteenth of the money and price that will be demanded for Cuba, to deprive Spain of her imaginary power over our western commerce, which stimulates her and her allies, to put such an extraordinary price of one hundred and fifty to two hundred million dollars on Cuba; and on far more republican terms, than to settle the people and posterity of the United States with a vast "national debt," as a dead weight upon their liberty, like that of England, as a perpetual source of tribute, rather than a blessing.

Now if it is constitutional for Congress to build, aid and assist in the construction of a Pacific Railroad, from the Mississippi to California, and also, to give the public means of the people to build across hundred miles of entire territory, so, double "Illinois central railroad," it is more equally constitutional for Congress to build, aid, and assist the construction of a far more national railroad from the Atlantic across the States of Florida, to the river Mississippi first, opposite the mouth of the Arkansas, about 400 miles, with part already in operation, ready for extension to the mouth of the Arkansas, as the most judicious and proper basis for a road, as contemplated by Congress to the Pacific.

The Arkansas is a long and noble steamboat river, extending far into "the big West," and embracing the most direct, safe, quick, cheap and profitable line of international transportation through a hospitable climate and fertile lands, direct from the Atlantic, east of the Isthmus of Florida, to the Pacific, as can be seen by reference to the large and improved map of the United States. And from the western head of steam navigation of that river, the mouth of the Mississippi, is the most proper and economical point to start the Congressional contemplated railroad through the most proper and economical shape of the Rocky Mountains, and at the most proper point beyond the mountains in each direction, to stretch—one branch to Oregon and the other to San Diego on the Pacific, in latitude 35, in South California, which is the most direct and practical and cheapest line from the Atlantic, in latitude 35, east of the Isthmus of Florida, from Ocean to Ocean; and from San Diego, then to San Francisco and Oregon, either by rail road or steamship, as the people themselves prefer.

The trade, travel, commerce and the people of the northwestern States would have an equal chance with the southwestern States, of concentrating at the mouth of the Arkansas, and proceeding to the Pacific, as to the Atlantic for shipping purposes, as their own interests and preference may require. And with a port on the Atlantic end of the line, east of the Isthmus of Florida, superior for heavy shipping to San Francisco on the Pacific.

The whole would be entirely international, direct, and the shortest route from Ocean to Ocean (as California) quick, cheap and safe in all times and all weather; and so far beyond the reach of the guns and annoyance of Cuba, that when Spain found she had lost her imaginary power as a power over the western commerce passing through the Gulf of Mexico, under her guns, to get across the capes and keys of Florida, her imaginary price for Cuba would be reduced to reasonable terms, and if Congress then wanted it, it would be a fair trade on its intrinsic value.

The constitutional and most economical and judicious national question, therefore, recurred to was, Would Congress "promote the general welfare," prosperity and safety, and also, as a preventative of war, as more judiciously applying eight or ten million of the one hundred and fifty or two hundred million dollars which would be demanded otherwise, for Cuba, in aid and assistance to build a national railroad across the Isthmus of Florida, from the Atlantic to Spain, Alabama, and across the State of Mississippi to the mouth of the Arkansas, as the first step, and as the most proper basis for their contemplated road to the Pacific? The northwestern and southwestern States would then, at once, have a national and grand commercial thoroughfare direct to the Atlantic for travel and the mails of a safe, quick and cheap escape, with their vast commerce, from the long, circuitous distance, danger and extra freight, insurance, damage and extra expenses, by way of the mouth of the Mississippi, through the Gulf of Mexico, and subject to the caprice and annoyance from Cuba, which Spain and her allies might deem proper to inflict. And then, when the Atlantic end of the route being first in operation and providing operation to the mouth of the Arkansas, it would then be in order for Congress to proceed with the western Pacific end.

The Arkansas is a long navigation part of the route, into "the big West," is already in the right line for cooperation; and which would answer all the commercial purposes; and, also, for travel and the California mail, perhaps better than a railroad, in any point on the Mississippi, for the same parallel distance west, towards California, and save the money and apply it at once from the western head of steam navigation of the Arkansas, to the Rocky Mountains, until the country may get rich enough to constitute a parallel railroad for the river navigation.

Let Congress apply one or twelve millions of the public money and means, to something more judicious, profitable, national and solid, as a means of safe, national, general prosperity and defense and prevention of war, than to run two hundred million *Don Quixote* tilts against the tricks and stratagems of extortionary diplomatic intrigue of Spain for Cuba. And at the same time, perhaps save the seed of "foreign entanglement" in war about it, and break down a deadly weight of a "vast national debt," of perpetual calamities and tribute of taxation to Spain, which would be worse for the more delusionary and burlesque upon the people and liberty of the country than it is.

Change the channel of commerce, travel and the California mail entirely from passing through the Gulf of Mexico, to a substantial commercial thoroughfare across the Isthmus of Florida, to the mouth of the Arkansas, which would be entirely beyond the power, danger and annoy-

ance of Cuba, and it will soon be filled up with intercourse on both sides along the line, and become a simple commercial rival of the river Mississippi, and a far greater and far more lucrative stock to the country, than the interrupted ship-canal or a road across the Isthmus of New England, as it is impossible for the general Government to build it, and it will be ultimately beset by the same selfish and the international contention of the Atlantic and Pacific, in various ways in peace and war, it seems just and reasonable that Congress should put forth its strong arm in the right direction, and assist in carrying the grand object into practical operation.

It would supersede the Panama and Central American routes; and, also, the Tehuantepec and other Mexican routes—always exposed to wind and storms and heavy expense and danger through the Gulf of Mexico, to get from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

And besides: There is another half-way national, and therefore, not national at all, Pacific Rail Road, springing through the southern and western part of Texas, headed by these or any other visionary speculators, with a charter from the Legislature of Texas, embracing an immense quantity of Texas lands, on each side of that high sounding "Southern Pacific Rail Road." Which immense quantity of lands would, no doubt, make a glaring map, with a rail road in the center, to get up "large land sales" at Auction, in the broker markets of the Northern cities or Europe, among great speculators at a great distance, unacquainted, personally, with the quality of these lands, in which they might be led to make vast investments of money.

And besides: That route would not relieve the general Government and the country at all, in peace or war, from the present trouble and danger and expense of freight, insurance, stores, etc., of passing around the Cape of Good Hope, and under the guns and annoyance of Cuba, and through the Gulf of Mexico to some port in Texas. And as soon as the preliminary conditions of the Road were completed, with these land speculators might get control of the title in the broker markets of the North or Europe, and get the money into their pockets and leave Congress and the country to wade the sea to the Pacific the last they could.

But if Congress will ponder to visionary speculators and money sharks of all their exterior routes, and also, to Cuba and Spain; and the impossibility of the route of the northern regions and inhospitable climate of the Rocky Mountains, with no basis on the Atlantic, the people of either the southern or northern States, will never have a safe, quick and cheap available route to California.

And, besides, a railroad through the northern region of the Rocky Mountains, would cost more than double the money and means that will be required to cross the Isthmus of Florida (part of the line now in operation ready for extension) to the mouth of the Arkansas, and from thence, a direct line of steam navigation, to the Pacific, in a hospitable climate, and level, cheap and direct line from Ocean to Ocean, and the northern route, without a basis on the Atlantic, would be like the man in the moon, who is assumed to build his chimney at top; and it would have no influence at all to reduce the extortionary price of Spain for Cuba.

The late address at Washington City are that, "there is no prospect of relief to the commerce of New Orleans"—that there were then eighty ships and vessels on the bar at the mouth of the Mississippi river, that could not get to sea, with cargoes amounting to twenty million dollars, belonging to citizens all over the United States."

This shows the fact (as I knew before) of the great importance to the northwestern and southwestern States, of changing the channel of their commerce, and getting out of the hands of Florida direct to the Atlantic, and leave "the mouth of the Mississippi" and the Gulf of Mexico and Cuba to themselves, and of less imaginary value to Spain.

As the vast country of the Mississippi, and its numerous tributaries become more and more cleared and improved, the vast and shoals of silt and sediment, when it gets down to about water level, will continue to accumulate at the mouth of the Mississippi, and the result will be, in time past, expended upwards of a million dollars in cutting those mud shoals, but they won't stay removed. The vast and increasing quantity of silt, sediment and mud, continually rolling down the majestic Mississippi, by force of the supreme law of nature, is superior to the power of man.

The object of a railroad, therefore, across the Isthmus of Florida to the mouth of the Arkansas, is not only national in every sense and bearing of the subject, but it is important that the public mind and the country be enlightened of Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi and Congress, should correctly understand the geographical, marine and commercial merits of the subject. And, also, that the members of Congress from the northwestern and northwestern States, who are all deeply interested in their respective constituencies, should bring this question before the next session for deliberate consideration in all its bearings, and read of all party and political feeling, for in truth and public case, it is not a party question at all, because it is equally important to all parties alike.

It is also necessary that Congress may, if possible, settle down upon the most safe, economical, and practical, and also the shortest and quickest international route of transportation, direct between the Atlantic and Pacific, and at the same time promote the best interests "and general welfare" of the northwestern and southwestern States of the United States, and with an equal Atlantic participation of the northern States. And at the same time enforce not only important, but, in keep Congress out of "entangling" with any foreign alliance "by way of Panama and Tehuantepec."

Let them make a general rendezvous for the northwestern and southwestern States at the mouth of the Arkansas, and let them, as their own right and choice, pour out their vast commerce across the Isthmus of Florida direct to the Atlantic, and then scatter along the southern and northern coasts, or to Europe, as the people may judge best for themselves in their own unalienable rights; and there will be commerce enough for all the southern Atlantic ports without quarrelling about it.

And when Spain finds that Congress can do better with one-sixteenth of the money, than to pay her extortionary price for Cuba (and still have an "Pacific railroad" she will either keep it in neighborly friendship, or sell it to Congress on reasonable terms.

The "thirty million bill" had it passed to Congress, would only been an "entering wedge" for a vast national debt, as a dead weight upon the liberty of the tax-paying people and posterity of the United States in all future time, more than half a dozen national Banks.

And besides, Cotton is worth a cent a pound more (average) in an Atlantic market, east of the Isthmus of Florida, and all other western merchandise and production in proportion, than in the Gulf markets, which would more than pay the railroad freight from the mouth of the Arkansas direct to the Atlantic, and leave the capes and keys of Florida, and the Gulf of Mexico and Spain, open for the free and far beyond her imaginary power, that if she would not sell Cuba at a fair price, it would not be worth the expense of going to war about it.

And besides: Suppose Congress were to lay Cuba at an extortionary price? We would get no ransom lands there for "public domain," because every acre that can be cultivated is already in Spanish hands, and the jurisdiction of it would get nothing but the debts and political jurisdiction of the island, and a vast national debt upon the tax-paying people, and liberty of the United States, and which would not pay, in the long, long end, a "dead Cuba" which, not only to the United States the one-twelfth part of a rail road direct from the Atlantic across the Isthmus of Florida, by way of the Arkansas to the Pacific.

And, in close the argument on the merits of the case, "the higher law of God" will continue to fill up the mouth of the Mississippi, to the prohibition of European and American ships, until in a few more years, the northwestern and southwestern States will have no other alternative, except from the mouth of the Arkansas across the Isthmus of Florida to the Atlantic.

Respectfully,

W. B. DAVIS.

WILMINGTON, N. C., April 18, 1852.